Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (amended) A method of charging slave devices in an electronic system in a staggered fashion, comprising the following steps:

a) establishing an electronic system including a master device and a bus;

b) connecting multiple slave devices to said bus; and,

c) selectively charging said slave devices with electrical energy supplied by said master device on said bus, wherein said charging of said slave devices is temporally staggered by said master device performing the followings steps:

(i) first issuing on said bus a charge command that is received by all said slave devices connected to said bus in step b), but which is by itself insufficient to cause any of said slave devices to begin charging; and,

(ii) then issuing on said bus a clock sequence in which specific clock values cause corresponding specific slave devices to begin charging so that selected slave devices connected to said bus begin charging at different times from other slave devices connected to said bus.

2. (canceled) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~step c) includes the step of said master device issuing individually addressed charge commands to~~ a specific clock value within said clock sequence corresponds to a specific bank of multiple slave devices connected to said bus, such that each slave device in said specific bank of multiple slave devices begins charging simultaneously upon issuance of said specific clock value.

3. (amended) The method of claim 2, wherein ~~step c) includes the step of said master device issuing individually addressed charge commands to banks of~~ said multiple slave devices connected to said bus include more than one bank of multiple slave devices, and wherein each of said banks corresponds to a specific clock value the issuance of which causes only that bank to begin charging.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein said electronic system is an electronic blasting system, said master device is a blasting machine, and said slave devices are electronic detonators.

5. (amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~step c) includes the step of said master device issuing a charge command followed by a clock sequence~~ said electronic system is an electronic blasting system, said master device is a blasting machine, and said slave devices are electronic detonators.

6. (amended) The method of claim [[5]] 1, wherein each of said slave devices has a scratch value and said clock sequence includes a clock value corresponding to the scratch value of each of said slave devices on said electronic system.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the scratch values of said slave devices are grouped into banks so that said slave devices are charged in banks during step c).

8. (amended) The method of claim [[5]] 1, wherein said clock sequence has a temporal frequency and the time during which slave devices are selectively charged is at least partly a function of said temporal frequency.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the charging in step c) includes a constant-current, rail-voltage limited charging process.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein step c) includes charging said slave devices in banks.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein said clock sequence has a temporal frequency that is chosen to ensure that each bank of slave devices is charged, at least until the attainment of the rail-voltage, without any other bank of slave devices being simultaneously charged.

12. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein said electronic system is an electronic blasting system, said master device is a blasting machine, and said slave devices are electronic detonators.

13. (withdrawn) An electronic system capable of charging slave devices in a staggered fashion, comprising:

a) a bus and a master device configured to supply electrical energy on said bus; and,

b) multiple slave devices connected to said bus;

wherein said electronic system is configured and/or programmed so that said slave devices are selectively charged with said electrical energy in a temporally staggered fashion so that selected slave devices begin charging at different times from other slave devices.

14. (withdrawn) The electronic system of claim 13, wherein said master device is configured and/or programmed to issue a charge command and a clock sequence.

15. (withdrawn) The electronic system of claim 14, wherein said clock sequence includes values corresponding to banks of slave devices.

16. (withdrawn) The electronic system of claim 13, wherein said electronic system is an electronic blasting system, said master device is a blasting machine, and said slave devices are electronic detonators.

17-20. (canceled).

21. (withdrawn) An electronic system for charging slave devices in a staggered fashion, wherein said electronic system is operated according to the method of claim 1.

22. (new) A method of charging slave devices in an electronic system in a staggered fashion, comprising the following steps:

a) establishing an electronic system including a master device and a bus;

b) connecting multiple slave devices to said bus; and,

c) selectively charging said slave devices with electrical energy supplied by said master device on said bus, wherein said charging of said slave devices is temporally staggered so that selected slave devices begin charging at different times from other slave devices,

wherein step c) includes the step of said master device issuing a charge command followed by a clock sequence.

23. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein said clock sequence has a temporal frequency and the time during which slave devices are selectively charged is at least partly a function of said temporal frequency.

24. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein said electronic system is an electronic blasting system, said master device is a blasting machine, and said slave devices are electronic detonators.